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ABSTRACT

Concerned that many important innovations in undergraduate education are apparently having little impact on the international dimensions of American education, the Council for Intercultural Studies and Programs, with support from the Institute of International Studies, sought to define more precisely the nature of the problem and to develop some preliminary and exploratory approaches to this complex, open-ended educational issue. The final report summarizes the goals, methodology, results and conclusions of the project. The fulfillment of the first project objective was realized in the publication of a guide to innovative approaches in undergraduate education and of two model units, identifying innovative approaches used in undergraduate study of Asian and African societies. The second project objective, to encourage more interest in imaginative approaches to the study of the Third World and to develop more linkages between those involved in undergraduate educational innovation and those concerned with international aspects of undergraduate curriculum, was met by a series of conferences which explored different aspects of innovation in undergraduate education. The major project publication is ED 076 494. (Author/KSM)

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# INNOVATION IN UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING AND THE STUDY OF ASIAN AND AFRICAN SOCIETIES AND TRADITIONS

## I. GUIDELINES
## II. THE CASE OF INDIA
## (THREE MODEL UNITS)

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September 1973

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Final Report

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September 1973

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
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## Abstract

Concerned that many important innovations in undergraduate education were apparently having little impact on the international dimensions of American education, the Council for Intercultural Studies and Programs (formerly the National Council of Associations for International Studies) sought support from the Institute of International Studies of the U.S. Office of Education to undertake a project designed to define more precisely the nature of the problem and to develop some inevitably preliminary and exploratory approaches to this large, complex, open-ended educational issue. The project had two major purposes.

The first was to identify instances in which "innovative" approaches have been used in the undergraduate study of Asian and African societies and traditions specifically and the Third World somewhat more generally.

The second was to encourage more interest in imaginative, if not necessarily "innovative," approaches to the study of the Third World and to develop more linkages between those involved in introducing important innovations into American undergraduate education and those concerned with international aspects of the undergraduate curriculum in general and Third World studies in particular.

Fulfillment of the first objective was the publication of Students, Teachers and the Third World in the American College Curriculum: A Guide and Commentary on Innovative Approaches in Undergraduate Education and two "model units", "Kishan Garhi Village, A Generation of Change: Technology, Society, and Culture", and "The City in India." A third unit still to be completed is "Providing Space and Shelter for Urban Populations."

In attempting to encourage more interest in imaginative approaches to the study of the Third World, a series of conferences were organized to explore different aspects of innovation in undergraduate education.


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## Introduction

Concerned that many important innovations in undergraduate education were apparently having little impact on the international dimensions of American education, the Council for Intercultural Studies and Programs (formerly the National Council of Associations for International Studies)* sought support from the Institute of International Studies of the U.S. Office of Education to undertake a project designed to define more precisely the nature of the problem and to develop some inevitably preliminary and exploratory approaches to this large, complex, open-ended educational issue. The project had two major purposes.

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Fulfillment of the first objective was the publication of Students, Teachers and the Third World in the American College Curriculum: A Guide and Commentary on Innovative Approaches in Undergraduate Education and two "model units" which will hopefully be suggestive of how new approaches to the study of Asian and African societies and traditions can be developed by resourceful college faculty members, working with their students. The first of these units is "Kishan Garhi Village, A Generation of Change: Technology, Society, and Culture" which contains a set of 200 black and white and color slides on aspects of village life taken in 1951 and 1969 and written material describing the slides and alternative ways to use them. The second is "The City in India," a series of silent, color 8 mm. loop films on life in ten cities, designed to show the growth of cities in a historical and economic context, as well as the variety of patterns of city life. A third unit, still to be completed, is a problem-solving exercise revolving around the basic

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*The University of the State of New York acted as the contracting agent for the Council for Intercultural Studies and Programs in the implementation of this project.

requirements of "space" and "shelter" in an Indian urban environment and will include census data, case studies of certain segments of urban populations, and the like.*

In attempting to encourage more interest in imaginative approaches to the study of the Third World, a series of conferences were organized to explore different aspects of innovation in undergraduate education. The first of these was held in March, 1973, under the auspices of the Council and the Johnson Foundation, at Wingspread, the Foundation's conference center in Racine, Wisconsin, and was attended by faculty and students from member institutions of the Council. A second conference took place in May, 1972 at Elmira College in New York, jointly sponsored by the College Center of the Finger Lakes, CISP, the Education Commission of the International Studies Association, and the Center for International Programs and Comparative Studies of the New York State Education Department. Unlike the first conference at the Johnson Foundation, which covered a wide variety of innovative approaches in a number of academic disciplines, the Elmira conference was confined to "New Techniques in Global Studies" and included preparation of sample units by the participants as well as participation in existing new programs. Another regional conference was organized by the Kansas City Regional Council on Higher Education in the late spring of 1972.

Experience with this project led CISP to approach the Lilly Foundation for support of a series of regional workshops on new departures in intercultural studies in the undergraduate curriculum in the 1970's. Eight workshops will be held across the country in the 1973-74 academic year, in which several thousand teachers and students will participate.

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*This unit has been delayed for over two years for several reasons beyond our control, including difficulties in U.S.-Indian political relations, the consequent problem of getting necessary Government of India approval for such a project, and some uncertainty among our prospective collaborators in India about responsibility among themselves for the project. These various issues have now been resolved through the assistance (and persistence!) of our colleagues at our sister office, the Educational Resources Center in New Delhi, and the project is now under way in cooperation with the Madras School of Planning and Architecture. Completion is scheduled for early in 1974.

## Methodology

At the beginning of the project, a request was sent to all members of the Council for Intercultural Studies and Programs to circularize their member institutions about the project and to ask them to send descriptions of "innovative" teaching methods to the Foreign Area Materials Center, the administrative headquarters for the project. Although the Council had some 400 member colleges at the time, the results of this survey were disappointing. Approximately 25 replies were received, and out of these, more than half were not considered "innovative" by the project staff. It had also become apparent by this time that "innovative" meant different things to different people. For example, at one institution, the introduction of a one-semester course on non-Western studies was considered an "innovation" whereas at another where a non-Western studies program had been in existence, "innovation" might be computer-assisted instruction or the use of slide-tape presentations for an entire course.

We believe no precise definition of an "innovation" is possible but we did decide to exclude activities which seemed to have become relatively common practices at a number of institutions and those which were administrative in character and were being used in all fields of study. Thus, for example, the introduction of a course in non-Western (or Asian and African) studies was excluded, as were junior year and other study abroad programs and one- or two-day conferences. Examples of administrative approaches include student-sponsored courses, contract grading, and independent study projects.

In addition to making requests for information by mail, the project manager and the project director made site visits to a number of campuses to try to elicit information on new approaches, and at times, to observe some of them in action. The results of these activities were more promising, as were those obtained from reading vast amounts of literature, from articles in educational journals to entire books on the subject of new approaches in the curriculum.

For each of the three "model units," a consultant was chosen who was a specialist in the subject matter to be covered and who had some ideas on innovative ways of presenting it. Professor McKim Marriott of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Chicago was selected to work on the unit on change in rural India because he had a large collection of slides taken at an eighteen-year interval in the same village, and had expressed an interest in

trying to use a small number of them in a variety of different ways to illustrate how the same material could be used to illustrate many different phenomena - e.g., aspects of change, women's roles, castes and occupations, agriculture, and agricultural operations.

For the unit on "The City in India," Professor Ainslie Embree, an historian then at Duke University and now at Columbia, provided the idea of attempting to illustrate the history of India through the history of her cities. Another consideration in selecting history was that visual materials are less widely used in this field than in fields such as art and art history. The cooperation of the Government of India Department of Tourism was also given to the project, but the political situation on the Indian subcontinent in 1971-72 caused long delays in its completion. The filming in India was completed a year after it had been originally scheduled.

Similar problems of Indian-American relations and other issues unrelated to the project and beyond our control (see footnote on page 3) plagued the final unit on "Providing Space and Shelter for Urban Populations" which is a study of providing housing and other services for migrants and other underpriviliged people in Madras. Personnel had been selected to work on the project, but approval for their participation was not obtained from the Indian Government until well after the deadline for completion of the project had passed. The project consultant and principal designer of this unit is Bruce McCartney, urban planning consultant and a former staff member with the Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Organization, Peace Corps, Action, and Education and World Affairs, who has had extensive experience in comparative urban studies and international educational activities. The unit is now being completed with non-project funds. It is planned that this unit will be completed in early 1974.

## Results

The concrete results of the project are the publication of Students, Teachers and the Third World in the American College Curriculum and the two "model" units described above. The letters requesting information, campus visits, and other activities connected with securing information on "innovation," however, had important, although less tangible, results. The project staff found a great deal of interest in knowing about "innovative" approaches among faculty teaching in the field of Asian and African studies. The conferences held thus far have also stimulated interest and, in some cases, led to the adoption of specific "innovations" by individual faculty members for their own classes.

Although mere numbers are not necessarily significant, at the end of the project, some 3,000 copies of Students, Teachers and the Third World in the American College Curriculum have been distributed in several preliminary editions, and almost 100 colleges have acquired the "model" unit on "Kishan Garhi Village, A Generation of Change." At the present time, the project staff is attempting to interest a commercial film distributor in handling the unit on "The City in India."

In the course of the survey of "innovation," the project staff discovered a classroom simulation game in Chinese history. The game has been published, at no cost to the U.S. Office of Education, as a title in the Foreign Area Materials Center's Occasional Publications Series under the title "The Ch'ing Game: Simulation and the Study of History." To date, more than 500 copies have been distributed. It is hoped that a commercial source will be found to publish a revised version of the game.

## Conclusions

The basic conclusions of the project have been set forth in more extended form in the major project publication, Students, Teachers and the Third World in the American College Curriculum, especially in the essay, "Novelty, Relevance, and Substance: Commentary and Speculation on Study of the Third World" (pp. 1-31) and can be summarized in this passage from the publication (pp. 24-29):

> Given all the obstacles, difficulties, and uncertainties besetting the introduction of innovative approaches to the study of the Third World, a not unreasonable skeptic would be driven to ask whether the game is worth the candle and whether in fact it is possible to do anything significantly fresh or imaginative in introducing American college students to studies of the Third World. The answer is clearly yes as the next section of this publication [describing specific innovations actually undertaken] abundantly reveals. But it is also very clear that the rate of progress in introducing such innovative ideas is very slow and touches relatively few students and teachers. If this is the case, the obvious next question is to identify tactics and strategies for increasing the rate of progress and the spread of impact upon an ever larger circle of faculty members and students.
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> College teachers have a long standing and by no means unfounded distrust of pedagogical techniques which, they feel not without reason, quickly descend to mere gimmickry if they are not firmly rooted in scholarly knowledge and understanding of the subject. From this it follows that innovative ideas cannot be sold to dubious and in some cases just plain resistant faculty members, simply because of the attractiveness of the technique involved. The faculty member concerned must be persuaded of the merits of the new technique or idea on intellectual grounds.
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> Many college teachers, to pursue this point further, see the classroom primarily as a place where information is dispensed and not as an environment in which problems are considered and conclusions reached by individual students as an outgrowth of their examination of particular situations. Most information, however, can be more efficiently and rapidly dispensed through books, magazines, and other media which can be used outside of class than through class lectures. If the instructor can be persuaded that there are more efficient means of purveying information, he may then

be persuaded that valuable class time should concentrate on learning situations in which there is increased involvement of students which in turn, by making them more active partners in the learning process, assures a higher degree of retention and understanding of the information dispensed in other ways.

A number of institutions have recognized that if college teachers are to adopt less traditional approaches in the classroom, they will need inspiration, encouragement, and support. Several institutions provide small grants of financial aid to faculty to try out new ideas, disseminate information about experiments being tried elsewhere, and otherwise try to assist the individual college teacher.

One good example is Syracuse University, which has set up a Council for Academic Innovation to give recognition to new approaches to education among the faculty. (A glance at the Council's summer 1971 Report on Innovative Teaching at Syracuse University reveals again the vexing problem of defining innovation since much of what is described in this report, although it is almost certainly new for the individual professor and possibly new at Syracuse, would be relatively old hat at other institutions of a more experimental character.) Syracuse has also established a Center for Instructional Development which provides "support services" such as audio-visual and graphic facilities to produce teaching aids for the individual professor, as well as assistance in research and evaluation to design instruments and procedures to gather data on student attitudes, interests, priorities, and performance. Such efforts by institutions to try to change the classroom behavior of their own faculty do not, of course, address themselves to issues of intellectual parochialism implicit in the Euro-American-centered undergraduate curriculum which is in fact what the vast majority of American college students encounters.

Conferences, workshops, and use of media of professional communications such as learned society newsletters are all exercises in the gentle art of persuasion which seek to convice doubting Thomases in college faculties of the superior efficacy of new approaches to the study of the Third World in terms of what their students understand and remember from these studies. Faculty seminars and other training or "development" activities, such as the overseas seminars in various parts of the Third World organized under the auspices of the Council for Intercultural Studies and

Programs by its member associations might also with profit expose teachers participating in these programs to newer approaches to the study of that part of the Third World with which the faculty seminar or a similar activity is concerned. And of course, to repeat a familiar lament, we would doubtless progress more rapidly if graduate education for college teachers were to give some attention to problems of teaching which all too rarely happens at present in any field of academic concern, and only very infrequently in some aspect of the study of the Third World.

There are, to be sure, numerous other ways of bringing about change in undergraduate education, some of them not so gentle. Student confrontations in the late 1960's probably have done as much to bring about change in the curriculum as several decades of polite argument among faculty members. External pressures and rewards, particularly in the form of financial inducements by government and foundations, are yet another means of bringing about change, and historically it certainly seems to be the case that the progress which has occurred in the postwar decades in building up Third World studies from a nearly nonexistent base has been as a consequence of such external encouragement. But college faculties and the institutions which they inhabit also show a remarkable capacity for subverting over the long run the objectives of their patrons by gracefully accepting outside dispensations and then proceeding to do as they have always done!

Set against these general observations about problems of achieving change in institutions of higher education is the circumstance that much of the thrust for significant innovation in American higher education in the postwar decades (for there has been significant change, notwithstanding the difficulties to which we have referred) has evolved largely without reference to studies of the Third World. Had the contact and interaction between advocates of educational change on the one hand and proponents of the Third World studies on the other been more numerous, study of the Third World might have progressed more rapidly than it has.

In sum, there are still all too few linkages between the universe of individuals, institutions, and activities involved in introducing change at all levels of education on the one hand and that universe of interest and activity which is directed toward enlarging our knowledge and understanding of the Third World in undergraduate education on the other. Important beginnings have certainly been made, but far greater op-

portunities remain to be exploited as we press forward with the challenging task of making undergraduate education "relevant" to the real world of the future.